**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

# EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT DEVELOPMENT/MANAGEMENT

**(acre)**

**CODE 647**

## DEFINITION

Manage early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife or natural communities.

## PURPOSE

- Increase plant community diversity.
- Provide wildlife or aquatic habitat for early successional species.
- Provide habitat for declining species.

## CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all lands that are suitable for the kinds of wildlife and plant species that are desired.

## CRITERIA

- Early successional management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community in density, vertical and horizontal structure, and plant species diversity.
- Methods used will be designed to maintain soil erosion quality criteria.
- Vegetative manipulation to maximize plant and animal diversity or to manage for any particular species can be accomplished by disturbance practices including; prescribed burning, light disking, mowing, grazing, or a combination of the above.
- This practice should be applied periodically to maintain the desired early successional plant community.
- When seeding is used, native adapted plant materials will be used whenever possible, but introduced species may be appropriate depending upon objectives.
- Management practices and activities should not to disturb cover during the primary nesting period for grassland species. Exceptions will be allowed for prescribed burning or mowing when necessary to maintain the health of the plant community. Mowing may be needed during the plant establishment period to control weeds.
- Measures must be provided to control sever outbreaks of noxious weeds and other invasive species in order to comply with state noxious weed laws.
- To benefit insect food sources for grassland nesting birds, spraying or other control of noxious weeds will be done on a “spot” basis to protect forbs and legumes that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife.

## CONSIDERATIONS

All habitat manipulations will be planned and managed according to soil capabilities and recommendations for management will avoid excessive soil loss.

Early successional treatments should be rotated throughout the managed area.

Treatment and/or manipulations shall be accomplished whenever succession has gone past the desired stages.



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Managing for early successional plant communities is beneficial if not essential for less mobile animal species. The less mobile the species, the more important to provide all the habitat requirements in a small area.

Design and install the treatment layout to best facilitate operation of all machinery used on the strips or to make easily prescribed burning boundaries. Whenever possible, lay out strips to have some multiple or full width passes by all farm implements.

Grazing may be used as a management tool to achieve the intended purpose of this practice. A grazing plan is required.

This practice may be used to promote the conservation of declining species, including threatened and endangered (plant, wildlife or aquatic) species.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for this practice shall be prepared for each site. Specifications shall be recorded using approved specifications sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The following actions shall be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use of the practice (operation), and repair and upkeep of the practice (maintenance).

Any use of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals to assure early successional management shall not compromise the intended purpose.

REFERENCES

Guthery, F.S. 1986. Beef, brush and bobwhites: quail management in cattle country. Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Kingsville, Texas. 182 pp.

Habitat Development for Bobwhite Quail in South Texas. Texas Biology Job Sheet TX-6. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Temple. February, 1986.

Habitat Development for Bobwhite Quail in the Texas Blacklands. Texas Biology Job Sheet TX-7. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Temple. February, 1986.

Kendeigh, S.C. 1961. Animal ecology. Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey. 486 pp.

Lehmann, V. 1984. Bobwhites in the Rio Grande Plains of Texas. Texas A&M University Press, College Station. 371 pp.

Lehmann, V. and H. Ward. 1941. Some plants valuable to quail in southwestern Texas. Journal of Wildlife Management Vol. 5 (2) .

Odum, E.P. 1971. Fundamentals of ecology. W.B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, London, Toronto. 574 pp.

Oosting, Henry J. 1956. The study of plant communities: an introduction to plant ecology. W.H. Freeman and Company, San Francisco and London. 410 pp.

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**March, 2000**

**APPROVAL:**

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State Wildlife Biologist

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Date

**STATEMENT OF NEED**:

This practice is needed in the

_____ FOTG.

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Resource Team Leader/District Conservationist

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Date

**CERTIFICATION:**

Reviewed and determined adequate without need of revision:

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Zone Biologist

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Date

_____

Zone Biologist

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Date

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Zone Biologist

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Date

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Zone Biologist

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Date